

## RESOURCE PROTECTION

# Reducing risk and responding to threats

Washington's growing population relies on the state's rich variety of natural resources for jobs, commodities, recreation, and sense of place. The work of protecting these valuable resources while using them and preventing damage and loss of healthy ecosystems takes many forms—prevention, response, regulation and technical assistance. And it requires DNR to recognize that, just as the resources are connected to each other, the needs of today and tomorrow are too.

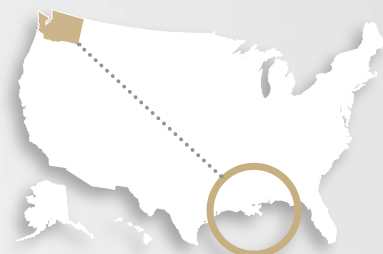
## Ready Resources Support Hurricane Recovery

Seventy-five DNR employees were deployed to the Gulf Coast region following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Forty-one were sent as part of Washington Interagency Incident Management Teams, and the rest were assigned as single resources.

The teams are a vital part of Washington's wildland firefighting efforts, and while deployed they were still on call for fires at home. As "all-risk" teams, they are relied on to meet a variety of emergency needs for the state, and can be used in other states facing catastrophic wildfire or other threats.

The experience of working with hurricane recovery and a large-scale disaster is an asset that all the DNR employees sent to the Gulf Coast have brought back to Washington.

For example, DNR employee Dave Willis was assigned to a California Incident Management Team helping FEMA with obtaining supplies and planning searches, activity that is similar to managing a wildfire.



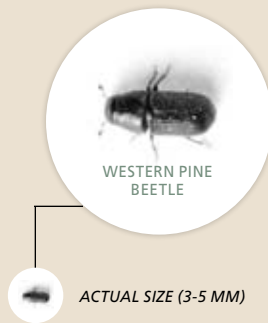
**//** It is hard to believe...  
until you see it for yourself."  
—Dave Willis



DAVID WILLIS / DNR



FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM / DNR



◀ Peeling away the bark of a tree reveals the damage done by one species of bark beetle. The western pine beetle's long sinuous maze-like egg galleries, cut into the tree's inner bark, cut off the tree's supply of nutrients and water, weakening the tree and when they have girdled the tree, killing it. Many bark beetles prefer moisture-stressed trees, but high populations of them can overwhelm even healthy trees.

## Preparing to Respond

### FOREST HEALTH PROGRESS

Having completed the legislatively directed *Washington State Strategic Plan for Healthy Forests* in December 2004, DNR has been working to carry out the plan and build on the efforts of the work group that helped develop it.

In 2005, DNR was awarded more than \$1.5 million in grant funding by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service for western bark beetle prevention and suppression. DNR is using the funding to provide forest landowners with information, bark beetle analysis, planning classes and cost-share grants for forest management activities that reduce the risk of damaging bark beetle activity (see above).

### GEOLOGY AWARENESS

Washington was reminded of the risks of geologic hazards this past year—from the devastating tsunami in southeast Asia at the end of 2004, to the 25th anniversary of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, to the earthquake in Pakistan, to landslides on I-90 just before Thanksgiving.

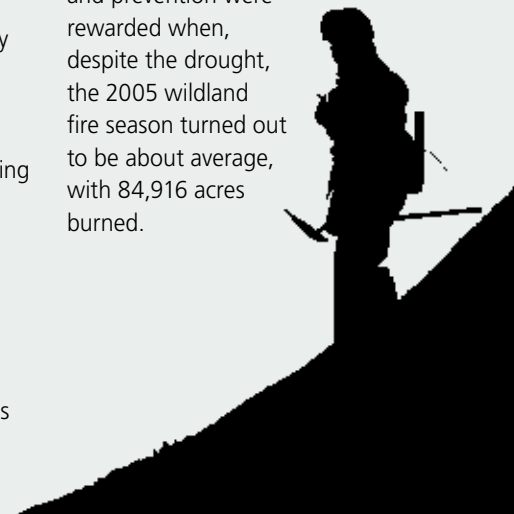
In 2005, DNR continued to map the geology and associated hazards for several areas across the state. Many such hazards in Washington are in areas where people live. Small earthquakes near two of the areas being mapped, Whidbey Island and Granite Falls, underscored the need for such work.

DNR will be working with the Legislature to ensure that the necessary tools and information are available to aid the public and protect the environment, relating to both the geologic opportunities and hazards characteristic of the state.

### FIRE SEASON

A statewide drought emergency was declared in March, increasing concerns about the 2005 wildfire season. Commissioner Sutherland supported Governor Gregoire's request to the Legislature for additional funding to assure that Washington was adequately prepared for fire. In July, the Governor and the Commissioner passed the DNR work capacity test and fire shelter training, allowing them access to the front lines at a fire.

Throughout the year, DNR worked closely with the Department of Ecology and other members of the Governor's Emergency Drought Committee to raise awareness about wise water use and fire prevention. DNR also worked with public and private partners to distribute a video on fire-safe landscaping and to produce a television program on the same subject. Preparedness and prevention were rewarded when, despite the drought, the 2005 wildland fire season turned out to be about average, with 84,916 acres burned.



RANDY WARNOCK / DNR

- ⊕ **Protecting 12.7 million acres from fire.**
- ⊕ **Providing technical assistance on forest stewardship, mining, geologic hazards, and fire prevention.**
- ⊕ **Regulating forest practices on 12 million acres.**
- ⊕ **Regulating surface mining reclamation, metal mining, oil and gas exploration and production, and forest debris burning.**

## Making Regulations Work

### SPOTTED OWL RULES

In late 2005, the state Forest Practices Board adopted resolutions and two emergency rules to provide additional protection for the Northern Spotted Owl. Despite efforts on federal lands, state forest practices regulations and several landowner habitat conservation plans (HCPs), the owl's population has been declining in Washington.



DNR PHOTO FILES

One emergency rule temporarily halts the practice of 'decertifying' spotted owl sites until June 2007, following the anticipated completion of the federally led recovery plan. The other stops landowners without HCPs or similar agreements from benefiting from actions on adjacent lands with such plans. The resolutions support protection for the owl by calling for a review of procedures and habitat information used to implement the forest practices rules; for rule improvements leading to increased management of owl habitat at the landscape level; and for active state participation in the federally led recovery planning process.

### FOREST PRACTICES HCP

In February 2005, Commissioner Sutherland and Governor Gregoire submitted an application for the Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (FPHCP) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The plan covers 60,000 miles of stream habitat running through 9.3 million acres of private and state forestland.

Approval of the FPHCP would assure private forest landowners in Washington

that if their forest practices follow the state's forest practices rules, they meet Endangered Species Act requirements for aquatic species. As a 50-year contract with the federal government, the FPHCP would help provide regulatory certainty and long-term viability, and it would require adaptive management, using the best peer-reviewed scientific research available to improve forest management and on-the-ground practices.

DNR developed the FPHCP in collaboration with other Forests and Fish partners, including the federal agencies that must approve it. Public review of the draft continued through the summer, and the state is anticipating the federal agencies' decision in early 2006.

### FUNDING FOR FISH PASSAGE

At DNR's request the 2005 Legislature doubled the funding for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, a cost-share program that DNR administers to help small forest landowners remove fish passage barriers on their lands. Removal of the barriers is required by the forest practices rules but can be costly. The program eases the financial burden and supports family forests remaining as forests.

The increased funding reflects both the recognition that family forest owners play an important role in protecting public resources and the program's success in the previous year. In 2004, 36 projects were funded, opening up nearly 60 stream miles of habitat. The 2005-2007 funding of \$4 million has allowed 27 more projects to be approved, which will open an additional 74 stream miles to fish when completed.



PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### 2003-2005 BIENNIAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- + Contained 95% of all fires at less than 10 acres.**
- + Provided technical assistance about insect/disease management to more than 400 customers.**
- + Completed 121 geologic and geohazard maps.**
- + Transitioned to remote sensing for surface mine permit compliance for 52% of permits.**
- + Achieved 99% compliance with approved reclamation plans on all surface mine permits.**
- + Achieved 97% compliance with forest practices rules on completed and inspected forest practices.**
- + Ensured that almost 97% of all large forest landowners are meeting their road maintenance and abandonment planning requirements.**